

We claim:

5 1. A method for treating nails and adjacent tissues comprising applying a composition comprising an effective, nail-enhancing amount of non-interlinked particles of bioactive glass to the nails for a suitable amount of time.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the average particle size of the bioactive glass particles is less than about 90 microns.

15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the average particle size of the bioactive glass particles is less than about 20 microns.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the average particle size of the bioactive glass particles is less than about 5 microns.

20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the nails are coated with a layer of hydroxyapatite or other calcium phosphate mineral that is at least 0.2 microns thick.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition further includes an aqueous solvent.

25 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition further includes a hydrophilic polymer.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition further includes one or more components selected from the group consisting of antibiotics, antivirals, anti-fungal agents, biotin, collagen, amino acids, proteins, vitamins, penetration enhancers, permeation/binding agents, dyes, fragrances and other cosmetically useful additives.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising removing the bioactive glass from the nail surface.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising applying a protective lacquer coating on the nails following removal of the bioactive glass from the nail surface.

11. A medicating device for application to the nails comprising a viscoelastic gel pad which conforms to the shape of the nail, wherein the pad is impregnated with non-interlinked particles of bioactive glass and an aqueous solution.

12. The device of claim 11, further comprising one or more components selected from the group consisting of antibiotics, antivirals, anti-fungal agents, biotin, collagen, amino acids, proteins, vitamins, penetration enhancers, permeation/binding agents, dyes, fragrances and other cosmetically useful additives.

13. A method of treating nails and adjacent tissues comprising applying the medicating device of claim 11 to the nails for a sufficient amount of time to form a layer of hydroxyapatite or other calcium phosphate minerals that is at least about 0.2 microns in thickness.

14. A method for treating nails and adjacent tissues in mammals other than humans comprising applying a composition comprising an effective, nail-enhancing amount of non-interlinked particles of bioactive glass to the nails for a suitable amount of time.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said mammals are dogs or cats.

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16. A method for treating nails and adjacent tissues comprising applying a composition comprising an effective, nail-enhancing amount of bioactive extract to the nails for a suitable amount of time.